

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8568

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: CONSERVATIVES CHALLENGE JCP-BACKED GOVERNOR IN OSAKA

ELECTION

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH COMING APRIL 13 TOKYO GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION HAS RECEIVED HEAVIER MEDIA COVERAGE, OSAKA GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION TO BE HELD SAME DAY IS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT. WITH OPPOSITION PARTIES DIVIDED, CONSERVATIVES THINK THAT THEY HAVE CHANCE OF DEFEATING INCUMBENT OSAKA GOVERNOR KURODA WHO IS BACKED BY JCP.  
END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE UPCOMING TOKYO APRIL 13 TOKYO GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION HAS CAPTURED MAJOR SHARE OF PRESS ATTENTION IN RECENT WEEKS, OSAKA GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION, TO BE HELD SAME DAY, SEEMS TO BE EVERY BIT AS IMPORTANT, AND PERHAPS EVEN MORE SO. IN ADDITION TO INVOLVING ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF JAPAN'S SECOND LARGEST CITY, OSAKA CONTEST IS FIRST IN MAJOR URBAN CENTER WHERE CANDIDATE BACKED SOLELY BY JCP COULD BE ELECTED. THAT CANDIDATE IS INCUMBENT GOVERNOR RYOICHI KURODA (63). HE IS BEING CHALLENGED BY HIROSHI YUKAWA, 56, (LDP) AND MASAMI TAKEUCHI, 68, (JSP-KOMEITO-DSP).

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2. DURING RECENT OSAKA VISIT, EMBOFF RECEIVED IMPRESSION

THAT WHILE CONSERVATIVES EARLIER FELT NO HOPE OF UNSEATING KURODA AND WERE EVEN HAVING TROUBLE FINDING CANDIDATE WILLING TO CHALLENGE HIM, THEY WERE NOW PREDICTING THAT THEIR MAN WOULD GIVE INCUMBENT CLOSE FIGHT. THIS GUARDED OPTIMISM WAS DIRECT OUTGROWTH OF FACT THAT LATE LAST YEAR JSP, WHICH ORIGINALLY SUPPORTED KURODA ALONG WITH JCP, HAD FALLEN OUT WITH GOVERNOR AND JCP, CHARGING UNDUE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN OSAKA ADMINISTRATION. WITH REFORMIST VOTE THUS SPLIT IN THREE MAN FIELD, CONSERVATIVES THOUGHT THEY NOW HAD CHANCE OF SQUEEZING BY TO VICTORY IN ELECTION.

3. GOVERNOR KURODA IS WELL KNOWN TO PUBLIC, CONTROLS LEVERS OF PATRONAGE AND POSSESSES ADVANTAGES USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH INCUMBENT CANDIDATE. MOREOVER, DESPITE FACT THAT JSP IS INVOLVED IN BACKING ANOTHER CONTENDER, AT LEAST SOME JSP AND SOHYO ELEMENTS (TEACHERS UNION) ARE REPORTEDLY STILL LOYAL TO GOVERNOR. AT SAME TIME, ONE-TIME OSAKA CITY UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR KURODA HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR INEFFECTIVENESS AS ADMINISTRATOR AND FOR TILT TOWARD COMMUNISTS.

4. CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE YUKAWA IS FORMER OSAKA VICE GOVERNOR AND HAS ALSO SERVED IN NATIONAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT POSITIONS. SENIOR PREFECTURAL OFFICIAL REPORTEDLY GAVE HIM HIGH MARKS AS ADMINISTRATOR. IN ADDITION TO LDP AND BUSINESS BACKING, CONSERVATIVES THINK HE CAN COUNT ON SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF KOMEITO AND DSP VOTES ALTHOUGH THOSE PARTIES ARE FORMALLY COMMITTED TO THIRD CANDIDATE MASAMI TAKEUCHI.

5. JSP-KOMEITO-DSP CANDIDATE TAKEUCHI, PRESIDENT OF ST. ANDREWS UNIVERSITY, HAS NO GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE. HE IS ALMOST 70 YEARS OLD, HAS HAD POLICY DIFFERENCES WITH JSP (OVER CONSTRUCTION OF NEW OSAKA AIRPORT), AND HAS PUBLICLY ADMITTED THAT HE ONCE SUPPORTED ELEMENTS OF JAPANESE RED ARMY. THESE FACTORS, TOGETHER WITH FACT THAT SOME OF HIS OSTENSIBLE SUPPORTERS FAVOR KURODA AND OTHERS YUKAWA, LEAD OBSERVERS TO CONCLUSION THAT HE IS LIKELY TO BE THIRD PLACE FINISHER. REAL CONTEST, AS THEY SEE IT, IS BETWEEN INCUMBENT KURODA AND LDP CHALLENGER YUKAWA.

6. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE "DOWA" (OUTCASE ASSIMILATION) ISSUE IS NOT PRIMARY SOURCE OF JSP-JCP SPLIT IN OSAKA AS IT IS IN TOKYO. ALTHOUGH KURODA HAS IN EFFECT ALLOWED THE JSP-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFFILIATED DOWA GROUP TO CONTROL WELFARE PROGRAM IN OSAKA, JCP HAS BEEN WILLING TO LIVE WITH THIS BECAUSE OF KURODA'S TILT TO JCP IN OTHER AREAS OF ADMINISTRATION. LOCAL OBSERVERS FELT, THEREFORE, THAT EVEN IF DOWA PROBLEM RESOLVED IN TOKYO IT WOULD NOT LEAD TO RESOLUTION OF JSP-JCP DIFFERENCES IN OSAKA.

7. COMMENT: GIVEN SPECTER OF JCP-BACKED CANDIDATE WINNING GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION IN JAPAN'S SECOND CITY, CONSERVATIVES

APPEAR TO BE PLACING AS MUCH EMPHASIS ON OSAKA AS THEY ARE ON MORE WIDELY PUBLICIZED CAMPAIGN IN TOKYO. IN ADDITION TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPACT OF KURODA VICTORY, LDP LEADERS FEAR THAT SUCH WIN WOULD GIVE FOREIGN NATIONS EXAGGERATED IMPRESSION THAT JAPAN IS MOVING TOWARD LEFT.

8. IN NEITHER OSAKA NOR TOKYO ARE CONSERVATIVES PREDICTING VICTORY, BUT, AS RESULT OF OPPOSITION DISUNITY, THEY ARE MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT CHANCES THAN WAS CASE EVEN FEW WEEKS AGO. THEY ARE ALSO NO DOUBT ENCOURAGED BY DECISIVE FEBRUARY GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION VICTORY IN AICHI PREFECTURE AND ARE NOW EVEN TALKING ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF DELIVERING "DOUBLE PUNCH" TO REFORMISTS BY WINNING BOTH OSAKA AND TOKYO. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WOULD BE EXTREMELY HAPPY TO WIN EVEN ONE. FROM OUR TALKS WITH LDP PEOPLE AND POLITICAL OBSERVERS, IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT WIN IN EITHER OSAKA OR TOKYO, IN ADDITION TO BUOYING UP LDP GENERALLY, WILL PROBABLLY ACCRUE TO PERSONAL ADVANTAGE OF PRIME MINISTER MIKI WHO WILL BE ABLE TO CLAIM VICTORY WAS RESULT OF IMPRRVED PUBLIC IMAGE HE HAS GIVEN CONSERVATIVE CAUSE.

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